462 Women are with them, also, a most important attraction or passion; and although a white person may consider her position an unenviable one as he sees her traveling beside her man under a huge load while he carries only his weapons, yet she is not treated any worse than the immense majority of women in our midst -- those women in our society who are able to pay others to work for them make up a numerically unimportant exception.

Furthermore when the Indians are on the move they are ever on the lookout for game and must be continually wary lest they be attacked. How then could the men be in a position to attack and also to defend themselves if they were loaded down by all their belongings?

The woman's role in Indian society is in perfect accord both with social needs and with her physical aptitude. She does not hunt, fish or fight, but takes care of the home, cooks for the family, and is always at work: She looks for roots and fruit in the forest; soaks chaguar leaves in water and spins twine from them; makes nets, bags and weaves; prepares food, repairs the home, ferments the beverages which the men drink; takes care of [183] provisions; helps her spouse in planting by placing seeds in the holes made in the skimpy trenches; takes care of the harvests...and is mother to her children.

In all the Indian camps which I have visited I have always been surprised at the continual round of labors performed by the women, who are always at work. In Mataco, "woman" is tziná and also quiécua or chécua, this last word also meaning "wife."

595 A man may have several wives, but only rarely does he have them all living under the same roof. The number of wives depends upon the husband's wealth and ability to support a number of families. There is no such thing as real wealth among these nomads, only 422 556 wealth in movable possessions, if we may call them that, such as skins, cattle, and the ability to work and steal which the man may have.

586 Very few, possibly none, of the chiefs have only one wife. The wife may be repudiated and in that case can again call herself her own mistress; but only rarely does she remarry because it is usually the case that she has already lost her youthful attractions, because she does not give up hope that her husband will take her back, and because she is kept from so doing by the shame she would feel before the tribe. When a man repudiates his wife this almost always leads to quarrels and feuds between the families.

because he was so tall, and the Matacos called Quiatzutaj, which means Vilelón (large Vilela Indian--Translator), because of his national origin and size, when I asked him how things were going with him replied: "Well...I...I rich...I having...much... algarrobo pods...I rich." They are miserly with these pods and with aloja, to the extent that they will not barter them except on very rare occasions. Only in a niggardly way and half heartedly will they invite anyone to share their aloja. 824 [556]

One morning I came upon a group of some forty Indians who were sitting around a yuchan of aloja. When I made my appearance and as soon as they recognized me they all began to shout: "John, John...yúc-cu-ás...yúc-cu-ás" (tobacco, tobacco), and I answered "hué-ni-tdé: niquiolá pac" (I have none, later I shall give you some). Only then did they invite me to drink with them and at my first refusal did not insist a second time, the chief saying to me -- "No my child...no...we...taking...you giving...tobacco." This was by way of politeness, in the Indian manner to be sure, but politeness nonetheless. I, to please them, made some effort to speak a few words to them in their own language and finally took my leave saying: "Amecná, nu yopil nuháuet...nutpinlá pac...niquioc-la yuc-cu-as..." (Goodbye, I am going home...I shall come back right away...I shall give tobacco). And all of them, full of pleasure because I spoke to them in their language and promised them tobacco shouted: "Amecná... amecná...tapil...ccaelitt (Goodbye, goodbye, come back soon). I returned after two or three hours with my pockets bursting with cut tobacco [190] and found all of them still drinking. As soon as they saw me they reminded me of my promise, which I thought they might have forgotten amidst the fumes of drunkenness. I distributed it to them and even when it was all gone they kept on asking me for more, upon which I turned my pockets inside out and shouted to them "namhuen, namhuen" (I have no more). They, satisfied with the eloquence of my demonstration, gave up their clamoring saying hée hée, which means "well, well"; but they forgot to offer me another drink of aloja. 123 574

While on the subject of greetings: these Indians have the custom of tapping the chest of their guests lightly and amicably with their half-closed fist, accompanying these caresses with expressions of good fellowship such as hée, hée, etc. -- (Good, good! etc.). 576

261
or of waging war, coupled with an iron constitution, allows them 147
to stuff themselves like gunny sacks.

A remarkable thing! Be it because of racial relationship, 261
be it rather because of the great similarity in their way of life, 171
the fact is that this same pendulum-like swing between extreme 147
frugality and enormous voracity is also to be found among the gauchos, and all the other inhabitants of the Argentine non-urban areas in general, not excluding other peoples of the earth who live in similar social conditions. So true is it that the same causes produce the same results regardless of where they happen to occur.

These Indians are very jealous of their equality. They do 554
not allow others to surpass them and the women are the first to attack any of their companions who, either because of natural gifts or the husband's ability, find themselves approaching a favorable position.

I cannot forget a bitter disillusion which fell to my lot on 556●
one occasion. Tajo, my Mataco language teacher, has a wife 123
who is an extraordinarily beautiful Gypsy type and looks, at a distance, like one of the more beautiful women of Buenos Aires. The husband was very much in love with her and I thought that I could not do less than to make her a present of a few cheap trinkets and garments. The husband added a few more things to my gifts and so the young woman was able to dress herself up in a manner unrivaled in the area.

As soon as she went out to show off her finery before her friends, dressed in her brightly colored clothes, she was received with admiration, but also with cries of protest.

I, who have often been led to sin in the direction of artistic platonism, wished to see the Mataco beauty in her new regalia and felt I had a certain right to [223] demand to be allowed to do so, but I found that it was not possible. The chief had forbidden her to wear her gifts because the other squaws had complained that her luxurious attire detracted from their own value; and so the young matron had been obliged to distribute her clothing among the others and to keep just a few scraps for herself which she would wear only every now and then, and then not openly.

Even among the savages one must adhere to sumptuary laws!

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

upon as perfectly natural, and since full reciprocity exists, such an act of apparent liberality does not even evoke feelings of gratitude in those who for the moment are the objects of it. Those who have been travelling and therefore have not produced crops, or those who for some other reason have no means of subsistence for the time being, have a claim on the hospitality of their fellow-tribesmen. Even when there is nowhere a real want the successful hunter or fisher gladly shares his abundance of food with other families of the village, knowing that others will do the same to him on another occasion.

Native law enjoins hospitality not only to fellow-tribesmen but also to members of foreign tribes with which the Indians stand on a friendly footing. The same hospitality and liberality is shown to a white man whom the Indians regard as their friend. For my own part I frequently had, both among the Tobas and the Choroti, personal experience of this Indian hospitality.

In spite of the liberality which appears in the relations of the different members of the community to one another, private property is strictly respected in all the tribes. We can particularly speak of »socialism» in regard to the *land*, which, as I have mentioned before, is considered to belong to the people in general; no Indian, not even a chief, has a direct claim to any part of it above his fellows. The flocks of sheep and goats feed on the common pasture. Similarly the natural products of the country, such as game, fish, wild fruit, honey, and fire-wood, are common property. But as soon as an individual family has taken possession of a piece of this common land for cultivation, its ownership is acknowledged and respected as long as the family actually cultivates it. What the Indian collects of the natural products of the country and what he produces or acquires through his own work — such as clothes, ornaments, weapons and implements, magical instruments, etc. — is also regarded as his exclusive property, although, as soon as food is in question, an unwritten moral law and social sympathy largely induces the individual owner to share it with others. The flocks of course also belong to individual families. The sheep and goats always wear property marks, so that when they are taken home from the pasture in the afternoon the Indians can easily determine who is the owner of each animal.

The lower Chaco tribes, particularly the Choroti and the Ashluslay, do not know of any distinctions between rich and poor, and even among the Tobas it is a comparatively rare thing that a man possesses more than his fellows. Only a few great chiefs who have made successful wars against

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

other tribes have larger flocks and more wives than the rest of their people. It is not a part of the Indian's nature to accumulate property for the future. This habit of living from hand to mouth is the chief reason of the poverty characteristic of the Chaco Indians. Only the women, who are in the first place responsible for the food supply in the house, may save food, at least for the next few days or weeks. The seeds necessary for the next sowing are also guarded by the women.

Among the Chaco Indians there is no law of inheritance, owing to the native custom of destroying a man's property, even his house, after his death.

Honesty is one of the native virtues of the Indians. Among the primitive *Choroti* and *Ashluslay*, who at the time when I travelled in the Chaco were quite unaffected by European civilisation, thefts and other gross crimes were entirely unknown, being prevented by the strong social feeling. Honesty is not only displayed towards fellow-tribesmen, but also towards a stranger and a white man, unless he has through his own conduct forfeited the respect which the primitive Indian, owing to his natural sense of right, would normally have for his property. As a significant proof of this I may mention the following experience which I once had among the Choroti. In April 1912, shortly before I intended to leave these Indians and return to Yacuiba, one of my mules ran away from me and was lost in the forest in the neighbourhood of a Choroti village, and in spite of prolonged searching could not be found. At last I was obliged to leave the village without my mule. At the end of the same year, about eight months later, I again visited these regions and the same Choroti village. My Indian friends at once informed me that some time after I had left, my mule had been caught by some other Choroti Indians and was now being kept in a other village, a few hours walk further off. An Indian was at once sent for the animal, and on the following day the mule was brought and given back to me. The Indians, supposing that I would return some time, had kept the animal, fed it well and taken care of it. It is needless to say that it would have been the easiest thing for them to hide it until I had again left, and to keep it for ever. They however considered it their duty to restore it to its right owner, who was a white friend of theirs. It is also needless to add that had the mule been found by someone of the whites living in these regions, I should never have seen it again.

The savage Indians are frequently accused by the whites of dishonesty. There is, I think, some exaggeration in this; but as a rule however,

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least ~~avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary~~ with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the